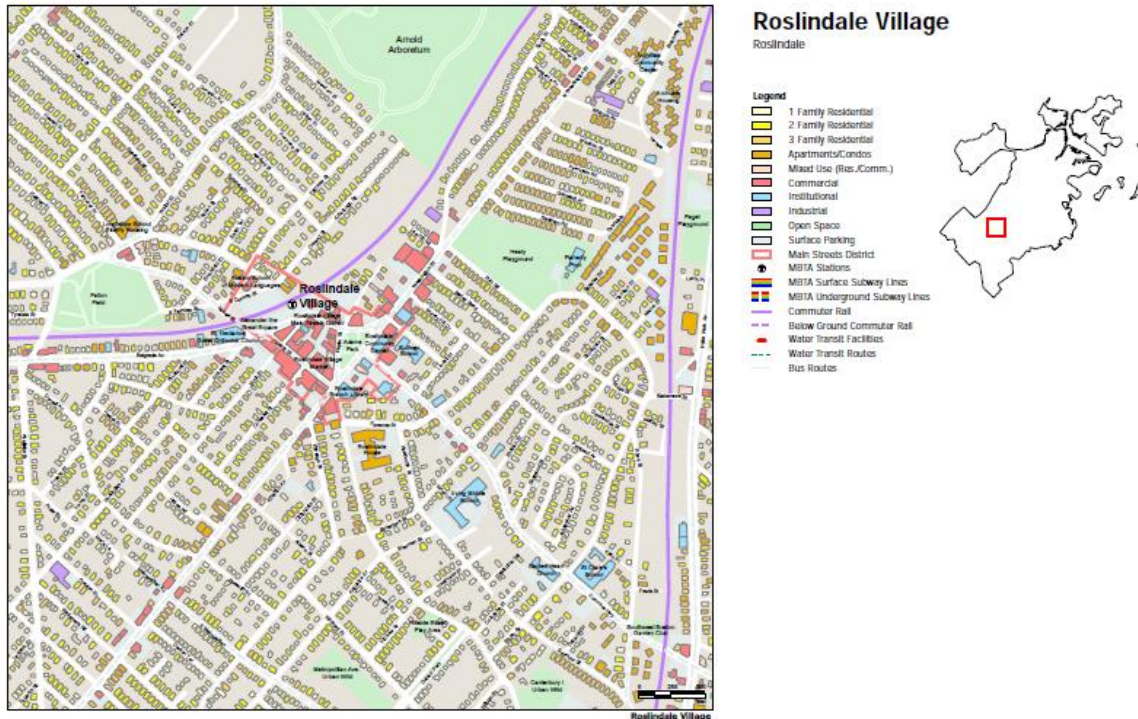


## Roslindale Village, Roslindale

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### Introduction to District

Located in the southwestern section of the City of Boston, the “village” of Roslindale is a commercial and residential area that today is described as being its own distinct neighborhood of Boston, although historically was part of Roxbury and West Roxbury. Generally speaking, Roslindale is located between the Forest Hills section of Jamaica Plain, West Roxbury and Hyde Park.

The commercial center of Roslindale, alternately called Roslindale Square or Roslindale Village, features an intact assembly of early twentieth century one to two-story commercial buildings along the major thoroughfare of Washington Street, and the secondary South Street, Poplar Street, Birch Street and Corinth Street. The triangular Adams Park (1917) creates the visual center of the district.

### District Layout and Boundaries

Roslindale Square sits southwest of Forest Hills, and is approached from the city on Washington Street. The commercial district is punctuated by Adam’s Park, a triangular green that forms a central focal point from which the rest of the commercial district radiates. The park is bounded by Washington Street, Poplar Street and South Street, all with commercial and municipal buildings that face onto park. To the west of the park are Birch and Corinth Streets, which

## Commercial Casebook: Roslindale Village

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round out the rest of the commercial district and that feature attractive commercial buildings that are mostly vibrant and well-used. To the northeast, the commercial district abuts the commuter rail tracks, which run northeast to southwest creating a distinct physical boundary. The district is surrounded by residential neighborhoods on all sides, and is close to the Arnold Arboretum.

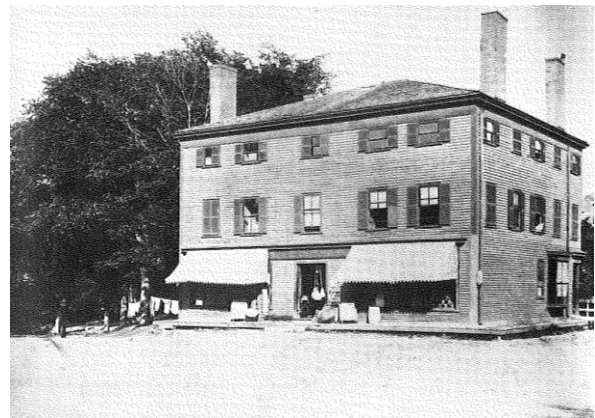
By car, Roslindale is mostly accessed by Washington Street. The district is also accessible by public transportation, both by Needham line commuter rail and several bus lines that link passengers to the nearby Forest Hills Orange Line MBTA terminus station.

### Historical Narrative of Roslindale Village

#### A small town carved out of Roxbury

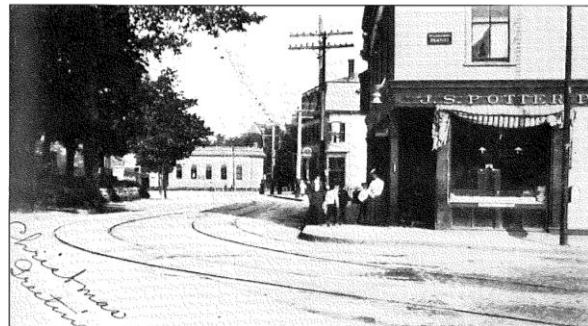
Originally part of the Town of Roxbury, which was settled in 1630, the area now known as Roslindale was established in 1712, when a small group of settlers living west of Jamaica Pond broke away from the original Roxbury church parish to establish a parish closer to their homes.

Roslindale was primarily rural farmland for the next 150 years. The Dedham Post Road, now Centre Street, was the main thoroughfare through the area in the 1700s. The Dedham Post Road completely bypassed Roslindale Village and consequently, the community and commercial area remained small. This changed in 1804 with the expansion of Washington Street, which connected Boston to Dedham and ran through Roslindale. The Taft Tavern, pictured to the right, was soon constructed to cater to the new traffic on the Dedham Toll Road. The tavern and hotel, which survived into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, was built on the land that is now occupied by Adams Park.



#### Trains bring development

During the formative decades of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, one of the most significant sources of growth was the establishment of the Boston and Providence Railroad. At this time, the area became known as South Street Crossing, a name derived from where the railroad crossed South Street. The emergence of the railroad and the building of a station at this location marked the beginning of the shift from a rural outpost to a commercial district surrounded by more densely settled residential neighborhoods.



## **Commercial Casebook: Roslindale Village**

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Politically, Roslindale has had a confusing story of identity and affiliation, as do many Boston neighborhoods. Originally, South Street Crossing was part of the western section of Roxbury. In 1851 West Roxbury formed its own government, departing from the greater town of Roxbury. In 1868, when Boston annexed the Town of Roxbury, the Town of West Roxbury inherited the area now known as Roslindale. Then in 1873, both West Roxbury and Roslindale were annexed to the City of Boston. Today, Roslindale is recognized as a distinct neighborhood with somewhat fuzzy boundaries with West Roxbury and Jamaica Plain.

### **The Commercial District Expands**

It was during these years after annexation, between 1880 and 1900, that Roslindale saw a period of rapid suburbanization and the expansion of the commercial district. With the railroad station and new trolley lines, Roslindale experienced an influx of residential development, which was mirrored by the growth of the commercial district. While the basis of the district was laid out by the early 1880s, much of what was built then does not exist today. Based on building permit and map research, it appears that there was a “first generation” of wood-frame, one and two- story buildings built here that were replaced in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century with larger brick and masonry buildings.

In 1887, an inbound train crossing over Roslindale’s Bussey Bridge, located in what is now the Arnold Arboretum, derailed, killing 23 and injuring 115 riders. According to some reports, the interest around what is described America’s first major railroad disaster brought hundreds of people to see the scene of the accident. Apparently attracted by the ease of transit between the city and the development potential of the rural landscape, many Bostonians were enticed to relocate to Roslindale. The transition of the area from rural farmland to garden “streetcar suburb” was in full motion.

### **Modern Roslindale Emerges**

By 1900, the German population of Boston, which had previously generally resided in the South End and the Stonybrook Valley, made Roslindale the center of its community. During this time, there was a building boom in the district and developers moved quickly to put up “taxpayer blocks,” or low-cost buildings meant to take advantage of the new population and inexpensive land as an investment strategy. These developers often planned to replace these buildings in the future after the area had stabilized and they could earn more from their buildings. Many of these buildings were never replaced, however, and often make up a large percentage of neighborhood commercial districts. Many of the municipal buildings and churches were also built during this era of economic and population expansion.

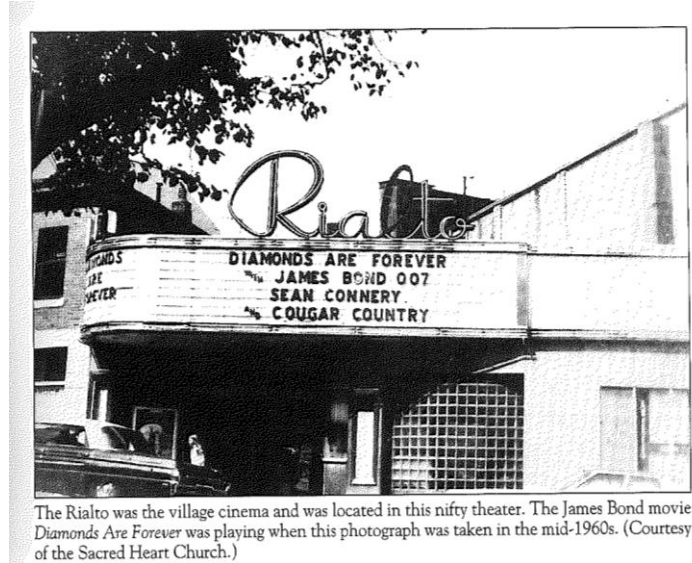
### **Commercial District Thrives into 1960s, Then Experiences Decline**

The horse drawn and then electric trolley system from Forest Hills to Dedham made the district the center of commerce for much of the southwestern section of Boston and its newly annexed neighborhoods. By the 1920s, Roslindale Square had taken on its present appearance. In 1917, buildings were cleared to make way for the triangular Adams Park, creating a visual center of

## Commercial Casebook: Roslindale Village

Historic Boston Incorporated, 2009-2011

the district. During that same period, many of the buildings that still exist today were constructed. The district had become an active commercial district, and remained that way through the 1960s. However, things soon began to change in Roslindale. In 1968, the large suburban shopping mall was introduced in nearby Dedham, and several grocery stores with huge parking lots were built. The small neighborhood commercial district no longer seemed relevant as more and more people took to their cars and shopped outside of the area. Paired with the general migration of the white middle class to the suburbs and 1974's busing laws, the commercial district, and to some extent, the adjacent residential districts, fell into a state of decline. In the 1970s, businesses suffered through arson fires, crime and general neglect. By the 1980s, the area suffered from deteriorated building stock, empty storefronts and vast disinvestment.



The Rialto was the village cinema and was located in this nifty theater. The James Bond movie *Diamonds Are Forever* was playing when this photograph was taken in the mid-1960s. (Courtesy of the Sacred Heart Church.)

### New Immigrants and a Main Street District Brings Restoration

Starting in the mid-1970s, a new wave of immigrants came to Roslindale, after a military coup in Greece. These Greek immigrants purchased homes and businesses in Roslindale, and built a church at the corner of Cornith and Belgrade Streets. These immigrants are often regarded as crucial to stabilizing Roslindale at a time of tremendous economic flux.

In 1985, then City Councilor Thomas M. Menino brought the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Program to Roslindale, establishing one of the first urban Main Street districts in the nation. Through technical assistance and small grants from the city, the new Roslindale Village Main Street program assisted with 33 façade projects, 43 commercial building rehabilitations, 29 net new businesses, and 132 net job gains-totaling over \$5 million in new investments over five years.

Roslindale Village Main Street served as the model for the city-wide Boston Main Street program that was created in 1995 and continues today.

Overall, the district has rebounded and is known as a vibrant commercial district with several small local businesses, including several food markets, bakeries, and restaurants.





## Commercial Casebook: Roslindale Village

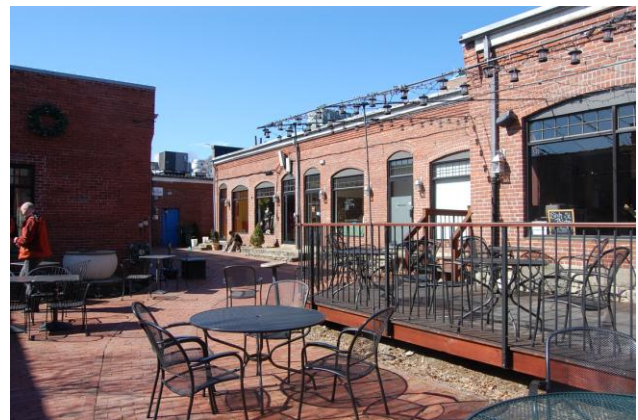
Historic Boston Incorporated, 2009-2011

### District Demographics

Between 1970 and 1980, Roslindale's population declined by nearly 10 percent. By 2000, the population had rebounded to some extent but had not returned to the same level. However, it appears that Roslindale has experienced more population growth in the last decade and that a demographic shift is occurring in the neighborhood. The total minority population has grown over time, and it appears that like the rest of Boston, Roslindale will be a minority majority neighborhood at this next census report. Neighborhood stability has also grown in recent years, and Roslindale now holds one of the highest residential ownership rates in the entire city.

### Roslindale Village Strengths and Recent Successes

Roslindale's commercial district is one of the strongest outside of the Central Business District. Home to the first Main Street district in Boston, today Roslindale Village Main Street is a mature organization that has catalyzed a great deal of change and improvement in the district.



Engaged building owners have enlivened unused spaces in Roslindale's commercial district and upgraded many historic buildings. For example, there has been a great deal of investment in properties on Birch Street, which has attracted strong businesses and therefore many consumers. The innovative courtyard space in the rear of these properties has established attractive secondary entrances, al fresco dining opportunities, and a special community place in an area that was once filled with dumpsters.

### Other Strengths

- **A food shopping destination:** Over the past decade, the commercial district has attracted several bakeries, a fish market, an Italian butcher/deli, a Halal butcher, a wine shop, a Mexican specialty food store, a cheese shop and a market selling Middle Eastern products.
- **Plentiful restaurants:** The district is also home to several popular dining destinations, making it the restaurant hub of the southwestern section of the city.



## Commercial Casebook: Roslindale Village

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- **New Construction:** Beyond some of the rehabilitation projects that the district has seen in recent years, there are new buildings including the Village Market, Staples, and the Roslindale Medical and Dental Center building. Currently, a parcel that once held a gas station is being redeveloped into commercial and office space.
- **Strong residential community:** As residents have been priced out of other neighborhoods, Roslindale has become a neighborhood that can boast some of the highest home ownership rates in the city. Combined with the recent residential boom of both young and diverse families, these factors have created a very stable consumer base.
- **Municipal Building and Adams Park improvements:** Substantial improvements to the Roslindale Municipal Building and to Adams Park have been a positive contribution to Roslindale Square.
- **Successful Rezoning Efforts:** In 2010, the Boston Redevelopment Authority completed the Roslindale Strategic Master Plan process, creating an important planning tool for the future of the district and the surrounding residential areas. The Plan makes note of importance of preserving historic resources and includes new zoning that supports Village's sense of community character.

### Roslindale Village Challenges

In Roslindale Village, the tight cluster of commercial buildings centered around the triangular Adams Park easily allows the area to be read as a traditional neighborhood commercial center. Despite this strong visual experience, though, there are several holes in that commercial center. Some of the strongest businesses actually exist off of the triangle, on Birch and the upper end of South Street, away from the park. Poplar Street and the lower



section of South Street, which should most benefit from the dense commercial development, the picturesque park, and the presence of consistent pedestrian, bus and automobile traffic, seems to have too many vacancies, degraded buildings, and a lack of anchor businesses.

- **The Roslindale Substation:** On the Washington Street side of the triangle, the Roslindale Substation continues to be empty, robbing the area of liveliness and commercial use.
- **Parking:** Many business owners and consumers claim that parking is an issue here, but it is not the lack of a parking lot that is the issue, but the management of those parking

## **Commercial Casebook: Roslindale Village**

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lots. Owned by several different entities, the parking lots could be configured better and have better signage leading visitors to them.

- **Location:** Roslindale Village feels tucked away and hidden since it is not near any major highways and relies upon Washington Street as its main access point. It is, however, well served by the commuter rail and several bus lines, many of which connect to nearby Forest Hills station, terminus of the Orange Line subway. While the district itself is quite walkable and pedestrian friendly, it is not a place that many would necessarily walk to from another destination.
- **Lack of documentation of the neighborhood's historic resources:** While the commercial district has a few "street information forms," that describe entire blocks of historic buildings, there are very few individual forms. In Roslindale, no commercial buildings are listed on the National Register or as Boston Landmarks. Only Roslindale Congregationalist Church (25 Cummins Highway, 1894; individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1991) and Roslindale Baptist Church (52 Cummins Highways, 1884; individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1998) are designated.

### **Overall District Recommendations:**

- Nominate the district to be included on the National Register of Historic Places, or take the necessary steps to earn the state's designation of eligibility. This will make buildings eligible for historic tax credits, providing equity to make rehabilitation projects more feasible.
- Identify the "high impact" buildings and establish goals/plans.
- Continue the work that has already been taking place in enlivening spaces such as the courtyard behind Birch Street and revitalizing buildings that need more life like the Droubi Brothers bakery/Vitello Building.
- Conduct a survey of rents, sales comps and space needs to better understand the district's business dynamics.

## Commercial Casebook: Roslindale Village

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### Opportunities for Preservation:

There are several properties that could benefit from restoration and renovation. This would help bring additional positive attention to the district and spur further neighborhood development. Details of each building are below and further information can be found throughout this casebook chapter.

NAME	ADDRESS	APPOX. YEAR BUILT
Roslindale Substation	4228 Washington Street	1911
Fairview Hall ("Imperial Kitchen" ) Building	47 Poplar Street	1891
"Delfino" Building	754 South Street	Btw 1898 and 1905
Basile-Marino Building (Tedeschi's)	4196 Washington Street	1929
Parkway ("Vorous Pastry") Building	4258 Washington Street	1928
Prescott Building	17 Poplar Street	1929
Roslindale Architecture Type: 1-2 story commercial buildings	Various	1900-1930

### Methodology

The properties in this chapter of the Commercial Casebook were chosen to represent the opportunities for historic preservation in this commercial district. By including them in this Casebook, we have identified them as places that are historically, architecturally or culturally significant to this district. The selected buildings and resources deserve attention, interpretation, protection, and to become part of a district's overall economic success and revitalization.

### Sources:

City of Boston Building Permits

Bromley Atlases

Boston Redevelopment Authority planning documents

Boston Landmarks Commission Survey Forms

*Streetcar Suburbs*, by Sam Bass Warner

*Images of America, Roslindale*, Anthony Sammarco (images)

### Recent or Ongoing Planning Processes or Studies:

- Roslindale Neighborhood Strategic Plan, Boston Redevelopment Authority
- Heart of the City Project, Rappaport Institute at the Kennedy School of Government, now housed at the Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy at Northeastern
- 2000 census
- MIT/ Tufts Reports



## Commercial Casebook: Roslindale Village

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### Roslindale Substation

#### SITE INFORMATION

**Address:** 4228 Washington Street

**Neighborhood:** Roslindale

**Main Street District:** Roslindale Village

**Owner:** Boston Redevelopment Authority

**Lot Size:** 6291

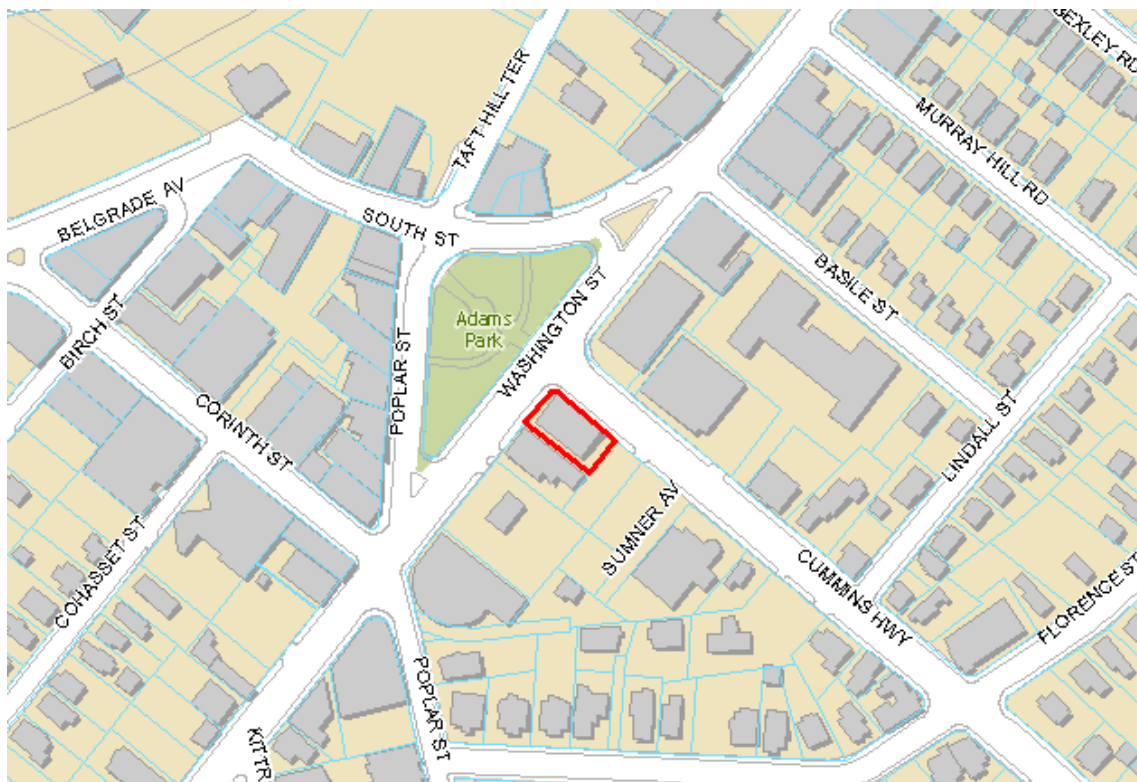
**Approximate Building Size:** 12,000 square feet

**Parcel Number:** 1904224000

**Ward:** 19

**Assessment (2009):**

Land	\$ 173,100	
Building	\$ 465,400	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 638,400</b>	<b>Tax: \$0</b>



## Commercial Casebook: Roslindale Village

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### ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

**Date Built:** 1911

**Architect:** Robert S. Peabody

**Designations:** Pending (?)

**SIGNIFICANCE:** Located in the middle of Roslindale Square, the Roslindale Substation is an electrical power conversion and transmission station, constructed as part of the Boston Elevated Railway's rapid transit system in 1911. Designed in the Neo-Classical Revival style by the Stone and Webster Engineering Corporation and architect Robert S. Peabody, the Substation converted alternating electric current (AC) transmitted from a new South Boston Power Station via underground cables into direct current (DC) for use by local trolley cars. With its high technology for the day, this system generated and distributed additional power at lower costs. The construction of the substation in 1911 also marks a time when Roslindale was expanding and becoming a very popular residential and commercial neighborhood. The electric trolley car system helped to spur on that development and settlement.

**CURRENT STATUS/EXISTING CONDITIONS:** The Roslindale Substation is currently owned by the Boston Redevelopment Authority. In 2010, the Authority designated the partnership of Historic Boston and Roslindale Village Main Street to determine how the substation can be re-activated and to assemble a feasibility plan. This followed the rejection of three private proposals to redevelop the parcel, which were determined to be financially inadequate. A 2002 feasibility study by Historic Boston indicated that the best use of the property would be for office and business space.

### PRESERVATION STRATEGY:

- Follow up on the National Register of Historic Places nomination and see what (if anything) is holding up that process. Conduct more research if necessary.
- Work with community to fully understand how the preservation and reactivation of the building will affect the neighborhood. Determine best use of this building within the context of the neighborhood at large.
- In the short term, make improvements to the exterior and light the building, drawing attention to historic details and enlivening the area.
- Fully explore extent of past environmental remediation activities.



## Commercial Casebook: Roslindale Village

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### Fairview Hall Building

#### SITE INFORMATION

**Address:** 47 Poplar Street

**Neighborhood:** Roslindale

**Main Street District:** Roslindale Village

**Owner:** Barry Goldman

**Property Type:** Commercial

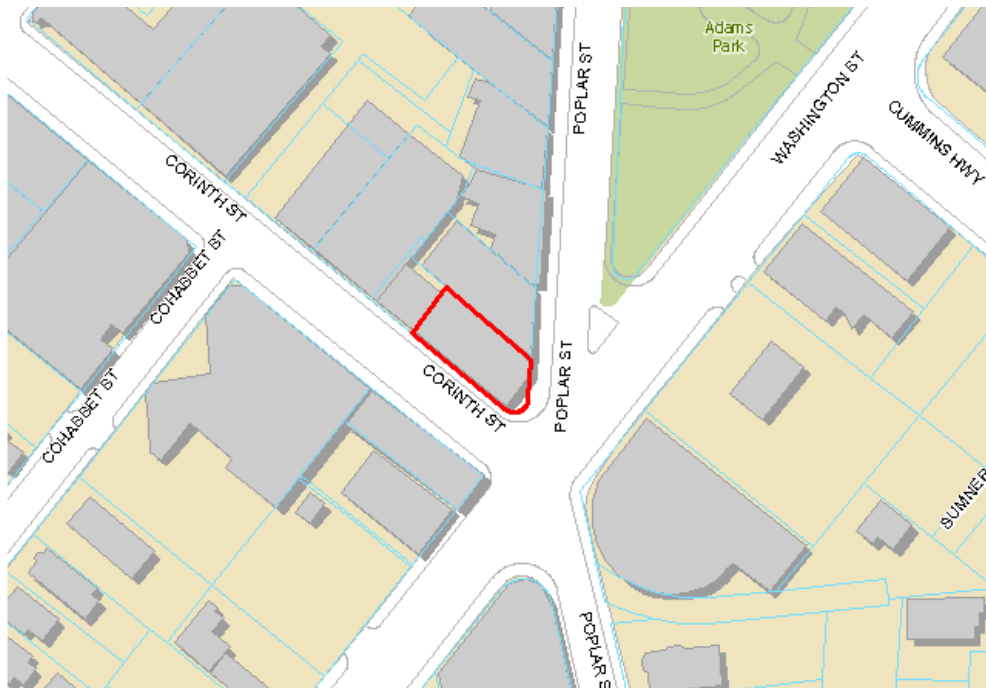
**Lot Size:** 3310 square feet

**Approximate Building size:** 9,000 square feet

**Parcel Number:** 2000079000

**Ward:** 20

<b>Assessment (2009):</b>	Land	\$ 130,300.00	
	Building	\$ 255,700.00	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$386,000.00</b>	<b>Tax: \$11,330</b>



## **Commercial Casebook: Roslindale Village**

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### **ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION**

**Date Built:** 1891

**Architect:** James Murray

**Designations:** none

**SIGNIFICANCE:** Designed by James Murray in 1891, this highly visible corner commercial building may be the oldest building extant in the commercial district. Murray went on to design the stick-style Roslindale Congregational Church on Cummins Highway in 1893, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The building at the corner of Poplar, Corinth and Washington Streets was built to accommodate a store on the first floor and a meeting space called “Fairview Hall” on the second floor. In 1937 the meeting hall space in the upper stories was transformed into offices. The storefronts were “modernized” in 1957, and the windows have been replaced, which drastically changed the appearance of the building (see photos). The commercial space on the ground floor has had many different uses over the years, including a clothing store, a jewelry store, and since 1986 it has been a Chinese food restaurant.

**CURRENT STATUS/EXISTING CONDITIONS:** The building is currently owned by long-time landlord Barry Goldman, who also owns the two story commercial block across the street on Washington Street with Vorous Baker). The first floor is occupied by a Chinese restaurant, Imperial Kitchen. It is unclear what the second floor is used for, but it is likely leased by a private social (soccer) club. Further down Corinth Street, the secondary first floor space holds a new ice cream shop. The owner of the business has recently upgraded the storefront and invested capital into the shop.

The owner of the Fairview Hall building has completed maintenance-level repairs on the building, including a fresh coat of paint. New awnings have gone up at Imperial Kitchen. The second floor is underutilized. As one of the historic anchors in Roslindale Village, this building is perched to be a real “game changer” with its prime corner vantage point on this corner facing Adams Park.

### **PRESERVATION STRATEGY:**

Historic photos illustrate exterior decorations and treatments that if restored, would contribute to the local character of Roslindale and would define this significant corner of the Square.

Investigate whether the Fairview Building could benefit from the use of historic tax credits if it were rehabilitated. If district designation is pursued, the Fairview Hall Building would be included as a contributing building, and therefore eligible for tax credits. If not pursued, the building could also benefit from the “non-historic” tax credit, which provides at 10% tax credit when filed with the IRS.

Connect with owner to better understand his plans and goals for the building and the other property he owns across the street.



**Commercial Casebook: Roslindale Village**  
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**PHOTOGRAPHS:**



Source: Boston Public Library



## Commercial Casebook: Roslindale Village

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### "Delfino" Building

#### SITE INFORMATION

**Address:** 754 South Street

**Neighborhood:** Roslindale

**Main Street District:** Roslindale Village

**Owner:** Steven Judge

**Property Type:** Residential/Commercial

**Lot Size:** 2090 sq ft

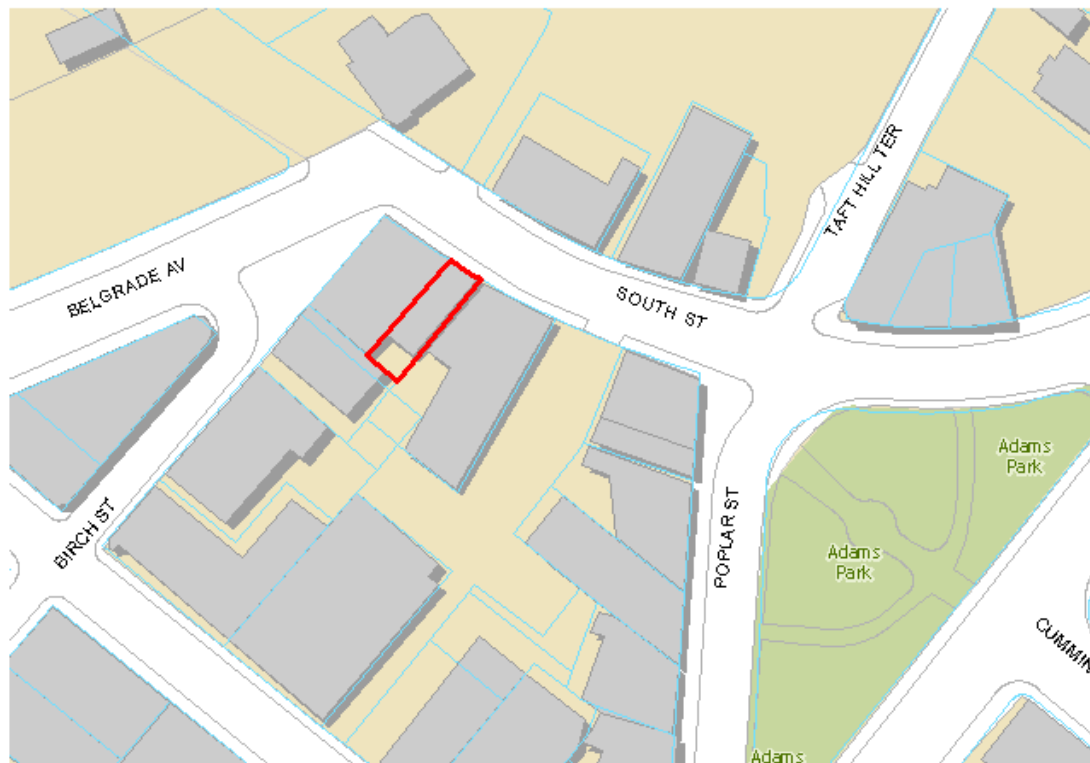
**Approximate Building Size:** 4000 square feet

**Parcel Number:** 2000091000

**Ward:** 20

<b>Assessment (2009):</b>	Land	\$ 62,600
	Building	\$ 215,900
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 278,500</b>

**Tax:** \$2696.49



## Commercial Casebook: Roslindale Village

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### ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

**Date Built:** between 1898-1905

**Architect:** unknown

**Designations:** none

**SIGNIFICANCE:** This narrow, two-story commercial building is one of the oldest buildings in the district and one of the most architecturally detailed. The building features a bold bracketed cornice and prominent brick corner quoins. The second floor rounded bay window dominates the façade. The storefront retains early decorative elements. The first floor has been used as a bank, a store, and a restaurant. The second floor has alternated between office and residential use several times over the years.



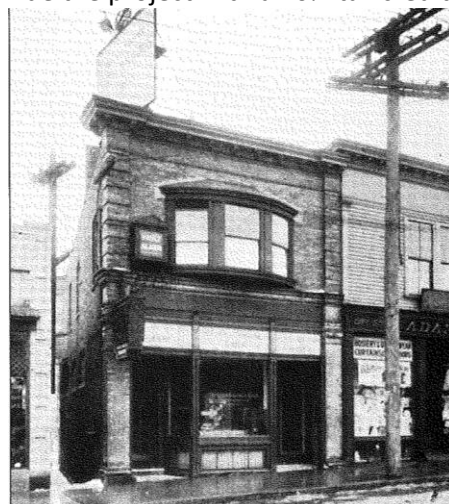
**CURRENT STATUS/EXISTING CONDITIONS:** This building, home to the popular Delfino Restaurant on the ground floor, is one of the oldest existing building in the district. The building was recently purchased by the restaurant owner who plans to embark on a basic renovation of the façade, which will include repointing and painting. The owner was recently granted up to \$2500 for assistance with signage, and a \$7500 matching investment grant for other expenses through a city-run program.



### PRESERVATION STRATEGY:

- Investigate the condition of the property
- Approach the owner to discuss the historical significance of the building
- Pursue National Register designation as a contributing building to a larger National Register district, if district designation is pursued.
- If the National Register designation is not pursued, encourage owner to take advantage of the "non-historic" Federal tax credit, which will provide the project with a 10% tax credit.

Source: Images of America, Roslindale



## Commercial Casebook: Roslindale Village

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### Marino-Basile Building (Tedeschi's)

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#### SITE INFORMATION

**Address:** 4196 Washington Street

**Neighborhood:** Roslindale

**Main Street District:** Roslindale Village

**Owner:** Jolin Realty (Vinnie Marino)

**Property Type:** Commercial

**Lot Size:** 3000 square feet

**Approximate Building Size:** 4800 sq feet

**Parcel Number:** 1903101000

**Ward:** 19

<b>Assessment (2009):</b>	Land	\$ 147,400.00	
	Building	\$ 273,600.00	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 421,000.00</b>	<b>Tax: \$12,368.98</b>





## Commercial Casebook: Roslindale Village

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### ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

**Date Built:** 1929

**Architect:** Maurice Levy (built by Basile Realty Company)

**Designations:** None

**SIGNIFICANCE:** The Marino-Basile building was constructed during Roslindale's commercial boom of the late 1920s. The Basile Realty Group was responsible for much of the commercial development in Roslindale during this time. The building, located on the corner of Washington Street and what is now called Basile Street (likely named for the developers), was built to house a showroom. What they were showing is unknown at this point, but the presence of an auto body repair shop at the rear of the building on the Basile Street side, suggests that the business was showing cars or auto mobile parts. The large show windows on the first floor now bricked over or otherwise altered were integral to this original use.

**CURRENT STATUS/EXISTING CONDITIONS:** The building is still quite handsome, despite the significant alternations that have taken place at the street level and the unsympathetic repairs that were made to the upper story decorative elements. Many of the changes to the building likely occurred in the 1960s, when the building appears to have fallen into disrepair based on building department records reporting dangerous conditions and sections of the parapet falling to the street.

The first floor is occupied by Tedeschi's store. As of May 2010, the second floor was leased to a realty group.

### PRESERVATION STRATEGY:

- Work with owner to devise a rehabilitation plan that will allow this building to serve as an historic anchor in this small subdistrict.
- Determine whether rehabilitation could be moved along by the use of historic tax credits.



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### Parkway Building

#### SITE INFORMATION

**Address:** 4258 Washington Street

**Neighborhood:** Roslindale

**Main Street District:** Roslindale Village

**Owner:** Barry Goldman

**Property Type:** Residential/Commercial

**Lot Size:** 14,690 sq ft

**Approximate Building Size:** 20,000 sq feet

**Parcel Number:** 1804489000

**Ward:** 18

<b>Assessment (2009):</b>	Land	\$ 197,600	<b>Tax:</b> \$ 25,397.85
	Building	\$ 698,900	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 896,000</b>	





## Commercial Casebook: Roslindale Village

Historic Boston Incorporated, 2009-2011

### ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

**Date Built:** 1928

**Architect:** Maurice Levy

**Designations:** None

**SIGNIFICANCE:** The Parkway Building is a two story building located on the corner of Washington and Poplar Streets, with the primary façade facing on Washington Street. The distinctive parapet features decorative panels separated by bold piers topped by ziggurats.



Building permits show that the Parkway Building replaced a one-and-a-half-story wood stable building that was razed after two horses fell through the floor in the middle of the night. The building was developed by John Basile of Basile Realty Company, a local contractor that developed several commercial and residential parcels in Roslindale including the commercial building at 4196 Washington Street, on the corner of Basile Street. He hired Maurice Levy, a relatively unknown Boston architect who also designed residential homes in Jamaica Plain's Woodbourne neighborhood. Levy designed an underground extension in the rear to accommodate plans to build bowling alleys in the basement of the building. The first floor has always contained commercial retail uses, such as pizza shops, bakeries and hair salons, while the second floor was used for office space. The attractive Art Deco commercial block is a significant character defining feature for the commercial district.

**CURRENT STATUS/EXISTING CONDITIONS:** The building is in fair condition and almost fully tenanted at this time. The building has been owned for decades by Barry Goldman, who also owns the Fairview Hall building across the street. The second floor offers some of the only office space in the district and is used by insurance businesses, doctors' offices and non-profit organizations. According to reports, the bowling alley in the basement has been filled. The bakery located at the corner has been active since the 1970s and does strong business, particularly within the active local Greek community. A Main Street supported storefront project to improve signage is currently in the works for El Chavo.. There are large billboards and cell phone towers on the top of the building.

### PRESERVATION STRATEGY:

- Work with the owner to establish some incentives for rehabilitation, or make a strong economic case for why he might benefit from increased investment and thoughtful maintenance of his building.
- Determine whether the Parkway Building could be included as a contributing building, and therefore eligible for tax, if National Register district designation for the district is pursued. If not pursued, the building could also benefit from the "non-historic" tax credit, which provides at 10% tax credit when filed with the IRS.

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Historic Boston Incorporated, 2009-2011



## Commercial Casebook: Roslindale Village

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### Prescott Building

#### SITE INFORMATION

**Address:** 17 Poplar Street

**Neighborhood:** Roslindale

**Main Street District:** Roslindale Village

**Owner:** Choice Closeout Inc

(individual's name-Maria Azrak, of Roslindale)

**Property Type:** Commercial

**Lot Size:** 4955 square feet

**Approximate Building Size:** 9,500 sq feet

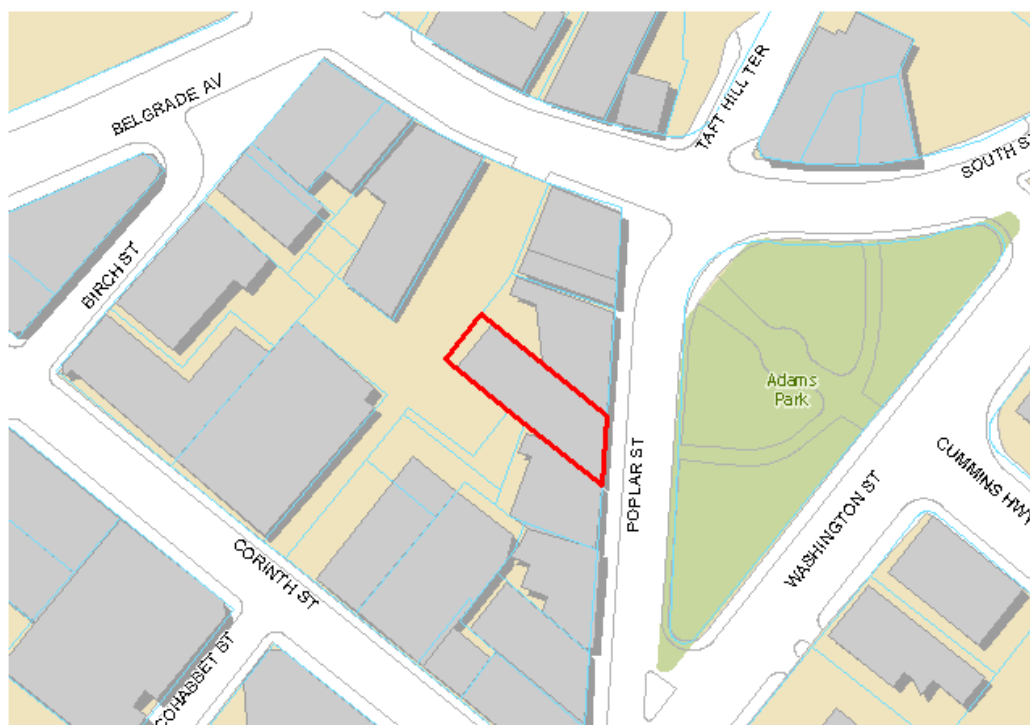
**Parcel Number:** 2000096000

**Ward:** 20

**Assessment (2009):** Land \$ 144,200.00

Building \$ 606,800

**Total** **\$751,000.00** **Tax:** \$10,179.80 (OR \$21,050.77 2010 Net Tax)



## Commercial Casebook: Roslindale Village

Historic Boston Incorporated, 2009-2011

### ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

**Date Built:** 1929

**Architect:** Harold Duffie

**Designations:** none

**SIGNIFICANCE:** Located on Poplar Street, facing Adams Park, the Prescott Building is a highly visible building within the district. The Prescott Building was built during the boom days of Roslindale. The large two story brick commercial building replaced earlier wood frame buildings that stood on Poplar Street. Building records show that a one-story wood store building was constructed on this site in 1895. In 1929, Anne Prescott petitioned the city to raze a one-and-a-half story building occupied by a store and a dwelling on this location. To design the current building, Prescott hired Harold Duffie, a prolific architect that mostly designed residential homes and was particularly active in the Woodbourne and Forest Hills neighborhood.

In the early 1930s, Prescott filed a permit to include an indoor miniature golf course in this building. Other long term uses included the Charlestown Savings Bank, a beauty salon on the second floor, and Blair's Foodland, for which a small one- story rear addition was built in 1946. The building's storefront has altered several times and a "sidewalk elevator" enclosed in concrete walls was built in 1942. It is unclear when this was removed.

The Prescott Building, if rehabilitated and leased to a strong business, could be the anchor property of this stretch of Poplar Street on Adams Park.

**CURRENT STATUS/EXISTING CONDITIONS:** The Prescott Building appears to be in decent condition, but has struggled in recent years to attract and retain tenants. The second floor has chronic vacancy problems. In the last few years, a yoga studio was using the space but has moved. A church congregation may have been meeting in the space, but it has not been rented for over a year. The building lacks an anchor tenant. The Roslindale Village Main Street organization has attempted to encourage that the owner make changes and investments, but she does not seem to have any available capital to invest in the property.

### PRESERVATION STRATEGY:

- Offer assistance to owner regarding the state of her building and the leasing structure in place.
- Develop a more comprehensive plan for the upkeep of the building and a strategy to improve spaces and therefore retain tenants.
- Determine if the Prescott building would be eligible for historic tax credits if the district were placed on the National Register. Pursue other sources of funding that may make a façade and full building rehab possible.





## Commercial Casebook: Roslindale Village

Historic Boston Incorporated, 2009-2011

### 1-2 story commercial buildings in Roslindale Square

**Familiar Name:** Roslindale Fish Market

**Address:** 39 Poplar Street

**Main Street District:** Roslindale Village

**Owner:** Peter Bregianos

**Property Type:** Commercial

**Lot Size:** 4024 square feet

**Parcel Number:** 2000099000

<b>Assessment (2009):</b>	Land	\$ 108,800	
	Building	\$ 407,200	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 508,000</b>	<b>Tax: \$6885.94</b>



**Name:** Meyers Building ("Romano's Pizzeria")

**Address:** 4249 Washington Street/41 Corinth Street

**Main Street District:** Roslindale Village

**Owner:** Demetrios Vardakostas

**Property Type:** commercial

**Lot Size:** 3000 square feet

**Parcel Number:** 2000038000

<b>Assessment (2009):</b>	Land	\$ 120,900	
	Building	\$ 326,100	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$447,000</b>	<b>Tax: \$13,132.86</b>



**Name:** Trethewey Brothers Building

**Address:** 4280-- 4290 Washington Street

**Main Street District:** Roslindale Village

**Owner:** Robert Trethewey

**Property Type:** commercial

**Lot Size:** 3720 square feet

**Parcel Number:** 1804553000

<b>Assessment (2009):</b>	Land	\$ 128,759	
	Building	\$ 215,574	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 344,333</b>	<b>Tax: \$10,116.50</b>





## Commercial Casebook: Roslindale Village

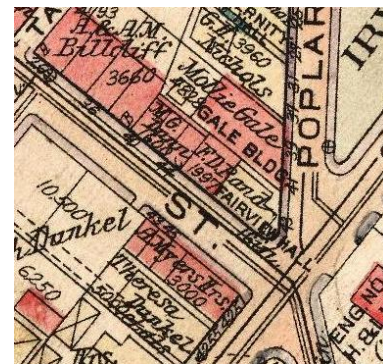
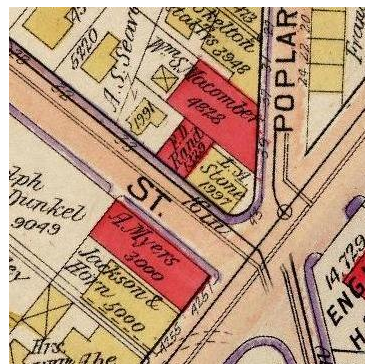
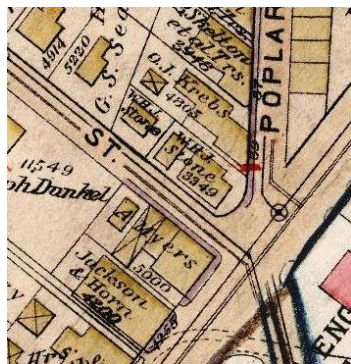
Historic Boston Incorporated, 2009-2011

### ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

**Date Built:** 1896-1904

**Designations:** none

**SIGNIFICANCE:** The three commercial buildings were built around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, between 1896 and 1904. During this period, Roslindale experienced a big building boom and many of the “first generation” wood frame structures were replaced by more substantial masonry buildings. Two examples of this type of transition can be found in the two story yellow brick building on the corner of Washington and Corinth Streets (the Meyers or “Romano’s” Building), and the two story Macomber (“Fish Market”) Building on Poplar Street. Both are great contextual buildings, creating a uniform street wall and offering a bit of density to the district.



The Trethewey Brothers building was likely built as a “tax payer block,” or buildings that were built by developers who felt that the land along these corridors would increase in value in future years. These buildings housed small retail businesses to produce revenue to cover land taxes in the interim years before the “real” development took place. Since the plan was to replace the buildings, they were often built with inexpensive materials and erected quickly.

### CURRENT STATUS/EXISTING CONDITIONS:

**Macomber (Fish Market) Building:** Home of the popular Roslindale Fish Market, the building is owned by the business owners. The second floor is underused and unsympathetic alterations have been made to windows and doors on both floors.

**Meyers Building (Romano’s Pizzeria):** This is an attractive, well kept building with a strong anchor tenant in Romano’s Pizzeria. The second floor is used for Hellenic Soccer club. The Corinth Street entryways need to be improved and the building has last roll-down grates in district.

**Trethewey Building:** This building, which has been significantly altered, is owned by a respected local plumbing family. The decorative transom has mostly been covered and many of the original storefronts have been boarded up. The façade of BK’s Pub is completely out of step with the rest of the building. It has been difficult to retain tenants in some of the spaces. There are other tenant issues such as a chiropractor’s office that always appears to be closed.

## Commercial Casebook: Roslindale Village

Historic Boston Incorporated, 2009-2011

There is a Main Street-led storefront improvement project underway for the first (easternmost) storefront, which is now a children's clothing store called Colorwheel Collection.

The Trethewey Building, which is a series of storefronts within an architecturally distinct building, is one of the few examples of this type of commercial block in the district. A similar block on Corinth Street was rehabilitated a few years ago in a Main Street-led project, and now features a unified, attractive series of storefronts. This type of treatment would be a great fit for the Trethewey Building.

### PRESERVATION STRATEGY:

- Uncover the original features, including the transom windows on the Trethewey Building and the sign band area of the Roslindale Fish Market building.
- Work with the owner to reverse unsympathetic alterations, including the covering/filling in windows and replacement of them with unattractive vinyl versions that have drastically changed the appearance of these buildings for the worse.
- Educate owners about the existence of the tax credit and other available improvement funds. These buildings would be good candidates for the 10% tax credit, as they were all constructed before 1936. Show owners areas of buildings that could be improved by removing later alterations.
- Make an economic case to owners that improved buildings will lead to improved businesses and increased revenue/rents.



Source: courtesy of the Boston Public Library